

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 ACDA-07 MC-02 IGA-02 AID-05

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /056 W

----- 034907

R 072314Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2922

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 11047

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, OTRA, PE

SUBJ: PROPOSED VISIT TO U.S. OF PERUVIAN ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF

REF: A. LIMA 10856, B. SANTIAGO 11505, C. QUITO 8494 (NOTAL),

D. LA PAZ 9690

SUMMARY: WE APPRECIATE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY EMBASSIES SANTIAGO, QUITO AND LA PAZ, BUT BELIEVE THAT LOW-KEY RICHTER TRIP AS PART OF ON-GOING MILITARY DIALOGUE WOULD BE HELPFUL IN OUR ATTEMPT TO MAKE OUR CONCERNS FELT TO GOP AND TO MITIGATE SOVIET INFLUENCE IN PERU. WITH CAREFUL AND COORDINATED GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON, OUR EMBASSIES COULD WORK DISCREETLY TO PLACE THE VISIT IN PERSPECTIVE FOR PERU'S NEIGHBORS. END SUMMARY

1. THERE IS MUCH IN SANTIAGO 11505 WITH WHICH WE AGREE. WE CERTAINLY CONCUR THAT PERU'S PURCHASES OF TANKS AND AIRCRAFT FROM THE USSR HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE ARMS RACE IN THE AREA, ENHANCED THE POSSIBILITY OF A REGIONAL ARMS IMBALANCE, AND INCREASED LOCAL TENSIONS. THESE PURCHASES HAVE ALSO INCREASED SOVIET INFLUENCE IN PERU, AND THE QUESTION BEFORE US NOW IS WHETHER THE U.S. SHOULD NOT SEIZE A PROMISING NEW OPPORTUNITY TO OFFSET OR AT LEAST MINIMIZE THIS INFLUENCE. THE OPPORTUNITY WAS OPENED UP BY THE VISIT OF GENERALS CAVAZOS AND WAGGENER, AND EVIDENCE THAT THE PERUVIANS THEMSELVES ARE BEGINNING TO

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BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL FOR SOVIET INFLUENCE STEMMING

FROM THESE PURCHASES. THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP IS THE PROPOSED RICHTER TRIP TO WASHINGTON, WHICH WOULD BE A CONTINUATION OF THE DIALOGUE AND A RETURN OF THE COURTESIES EXTENDED TO THE U.S. GENERALS DURING THEIR VISIT HERE.

2. THE DAYS WHEN THE U.S. COULD CONTROL OR STRONGLY INFLUENCE REGIONAL ARMS PURCHASES AND THE ARMS BALANCE THROUGH JUDICIOUS DISTRIBUTION OF VINTAGE WEAPONS SYSTEMS ARE GONE. FOR REASONS OF PRICE, CREDIT AND AVAILABILITY, U.S. MILITARY EQUIPMENT SALES TO PERU ARE NOW RUNNING 20 PERCENT OR LESS OF PERU'S TOTAL WEAPONS PURCHASES. THROUGH POLITICALLY MOTIVATED CONCESSIONARY SALES THE SOVIETS HAVE IN RECENT YEARS SOLD MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEMS TO THE PERUVIAN ARMY (TANKS, ARTILLERY AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT MISSILES) AND NOW TO THE AIR FORCE (THE SU-22'S). YET, CONSIDERABLE SENTIMENT AGAINST SUCH PURCHASES FROM THE USSR EXISTS IN THE AIR FORCE, AND THE PERUVIAN NAVY CONTINUES STRONGLY TO RESIST THE SOVIET SIREN SONG AND TO CONSIDER ITSELF VERY MUCH U.S. ORIENTED, DESPITE THE FACT THAT IT HAS HAD TO TURN INCREASINGLY TO WESTERN EUROPE FOR ITS MODERNIZATION NEEDS. FORMER PRIME MINISTER GEN. FERNANDEZ MALDONADO, THE ARMY'S PRIMARY ADVOCATE OF SOVIET PURCHASES, WAS DUMPED (EARLY RETIREMENT) LAST JULY, AND IT IS HOPED THAT WITH THIS INFLUENCE GONE ALONG WITH OTHER KEY LEFTIST PRO-SOVIET GENERALS, THERE WILL BE LESS PREDISPOSITION EVEN IN THE ARMY FOR SOVIET PURCHASES TO MEET MODERNIZATION NEEDS.

3. IN SUCH A SITUATION, WE CAN ATTEMPT TO LIMIT SOVIET INFLUENCE AND INCREASE OUR OWN BY WORKING WITH KEY, MODERATE MILITARY LEADERS SUCH AS ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF RICHTER (WHO MAY WELL BE THE NEXT PERUVIAN CHIEF OF STATE) AND BY MAINTAINING OUR TRAINING AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH THE PERUVIAN MILITARY. NO ONE CAN SAY FOR SURE WHETHER THIS COURSE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN REDUCING SOVIET INFLUENCE. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE ATTEMPT IS WORTH MAKING AND WE HOPE THAT BY KEEPING OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION TO THE PERUVIAN MILITARY IN FIELDS OF DIRECT INTEREST TO THEM WE CAN EXERCISE SOME POSITIVE INFLUENCE IN THE AREAS OF CONCERN POSED BY EMBASSY SANTIAGO-- WHICH WE SHARE.

4. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT A VISIT BY GENERAL RICHTER TO WASHINGTON IS AN OPPORTUNITY WE SHOULD NOT MISS. AT THE
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SAME TIME, HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT WEDDED TO A JANUARY-FEBRUARY TIME FRAME AND COULD EASILY EXPLAIN TO ARBULU AND RICHTER OUR REASONS (CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION, END-OF-YEAR ACTIVITIES, ETC.) FOR A LATER VISIT. IN THE MEANTIME, THE DIALOGUE COULD BE MAINTAINED THROUGH THE RESPECTIVE EMBASSIES IN LIMA AND IN WASHINGTON) AND PERHAPS FURTHER COMMUNICATION AMONG GENERALS ARBULU, RICHTER, CAVAZOS AND WAGGENER. IN ADDITION, NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WILL HOPEFULLY KEEP THE PRESSURE ON BY

EXPRESSING DIRECTLY TO THE GOP THEIR DEEPLY FELT CONCERNS
ABOUT PERUVIAN ARMS PURCHASES AND SOVIET INFLUENCE HERE.

5. WITH RESPECT TO QUITO'S CONCERNS (REF C), WE BELIEVE
THAT THE INVITATION TO GENERAL RICHTER SHOULD BE AN INFORMAL ONE,
AND THAT HIS TRIP SHOULD BE RELATIVELY LOW KEY AND NOT HIGHLY
PUBLICIZED. IT WOULD ENTAIL, AND COULD BE PORTRAYED AS, A
ROUTINE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS OF AN ESSENTIALLY TECHNICAL NATURE
STEMMING FROM OUR EXISTING FMS RELATIONSHIPS. IT WOULD NOT
BE ACCURATE TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT THE RICHTER VISIT IS A
PERUVIAN RATHER THAN A U.S. INITIATIVE. IT IS IN FACT A
LOGICAL FOLLOW-ON FROM THE ORIGINAL U.S. INITIATIVE ALREADY
TAKEN IN THE CAVAZOS/WAGGENER VISIT.

6. AS TO LA PAZ 9690, WE CERTAINLY DO NOT WISH TO AND COULD
NOT IN ANY CASE ENTER INTO REGIONAL ARMS RACE IN ANY SIGNIFI-
CANT WAY GIVEN CONSTRAINTS ON SIZE AND TERMS OF OUR FMS PROGRAM.
THIS POINT COULD BE MADE CLEAR TO BOLIVIANS AND OTHERS. NOR
SHOULD PROPOSED RICHTER TRIP BE ASSOCIATED WITH CORRIDOR
QUESTION, TO WHICH IT IS NOT RELATED IN ANY WAY. OUR GUIDANCE
SHOULD BE EXPLICIT THAT TRIP RELATES TO ON-GOING FMS MATTERS
ONLY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MILITARY VISITS, NEGOTIATIONS, REARMAMENT, MILITARY SALES, ARTILLERY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LIMA11047
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760453-0076
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761267/aaaacfnk.tel
Line Count: 138
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LIMA 10856, 76 SANTIAGO 11505, 76 QUITO 8494, 76 LA PAZ 9690
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUL 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <12 JUL 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED VISIT TO U.S. OF PERUVIAN ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, OTRA, PE, UR, US, (RICHTER PRADA, PEDRO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006